

b. Amendment to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Turning first to FIGS. 1 and 2, a bracket and pole assembly according to the present invention, generally referred to as **10**, is for use on a raised flooring surface, such as a deck. The bracket and pole assembly **10** comprises a bracket **11**, which includes two bracket shaft joist walls **19** separated by a bracket shaft **20**. The bracket shaft is enclosed by a first bracket wall **23**, a second bracket wall **24**, and a third bracket wall **25**. A first end of the first bracket wall **23** is substantially perpendicularly connected to an end of one bracket shaft joist wall **19**, and a first end of the third bracket wall **25** is substantially perpendicularly connected to an end of the other bracket shaft joist wall **19**. The second bracket wall **24** is longitudinally oriented to the bracket shaft joist walls **19**. Similarly, the first bracket support wall **23** and the third bracket wall **25** are both longitudinally oriented. In the preferred embodiment depicted in FIGS. 1 and 2, the bracket shaft joist walls **19**, first bracket wall **23**, second bracket wall **24**, and third bracket wall **25** are each generally rectangular in shape. A plurality of similarly sized, spaced apart, generally circular bracket holes **21** extend transversely through the bracket shaft joist walls **19**. As seen in FIGS. 1 and 2, the bracket holes 21 include inner 21a and outer 21b bracket holes. The first, inner set 21a of bracket holes is/are adjacent the bracket shaft and spaced apart from the second, outer set 21b of bracket holes. The bracket holes 21a, b being at different, strategic distances from the fulcrum (base of the pole) decreases the likelihood that the brackets will rotate or dislodge over time in use. In FIG. 1, two sets of outer bracket holes 21b (two in each set) are nearer the outside edges of the bracket 11, and two sets of inner bracket holes 21a (two in each set) are shown adjacent to the bracket shaft. To install the bracket **11** in the raised flooring surface, bracket bolts **22** are inserted perpendicularly through the bottom

of the first bracket wall **23** and the bottom of the third bracket wall **25**, so they extend through the bracket shaft. —